

## "Roxanne"

The painting "Roxanne" is only the first in what we hope will be a suite of paintings from Mike. Like the sculptures, paintings require a large block of time to do, so they will probably be slower in coming,... maybe two a year. Mike actually has a 1976 undergraduate degree in canvas painting. As a student, he did hundreds of canvases. But not one in the last 20 years. He does not seem to have lost a bit of his skill, though. In fact, it seems 20 additional years of serious "observing" has honed his eye.

Below are "in- progress" shots we took of Mike's "Roxanne" canvas. We thought you'd appreciate seeing how Mike works....which is, amazingly fast and loose.

After sketching the basic composition in pencil, he immediately scrambles the white of the canvas in a flurry of expressionistic color washes. As he says, "All this underlying color shows through the final surface in very subtle ways. Plus, it ties all elements together right off the bat. Gives the table something in common with the figure."

After that, he immediately goes into loosely defining big blocks of light and dark shapes. This stage, (picture 3 &4) is much like what inkers do on comics, that is "working out the blacks"...only Mike employs color here. From there, it's pretty much simply a refining process.

Mike says the biggest thing he tries to guard against is getting "fussy" and losing the "life" of the work. He considers shooting for "realism" a very low expectation for art. "Painting can be much better communicators than a photograph, because paintings can not only 'depict' life, they can actually 'be lively', in themselves." He continues, "Ironically, overbearing detail and the removal of all evidence of brushwork, can have the exact opposite effect intended.. Instead of bringing the canvas to life, it can actually 'drain' all life and spontaneity out of it." Roxanne is a beautiful, vivacious girl. The canvas should reflect those wonderful attributes with bright, lively, loosely swirled colors. The painting should do more than just "look" like the subject, it should "feel" like the subject.





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7.



8.

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